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BY VICTOR H. ALLEMANDY.

"STUDIES OF CHILDHOOD," Sully.

IN the previous article I referred briefly to the work which Dr. Sully has done for Child Psychology. Until recent years no subject was more neglected than the study of the child mind, but owing to the scientific studies and researches of Sully, Compayré, Preyer, and others, we now have a valuable mine of information relating to the growth and characteristics of the mind of a child. Professor Sully is the author of several psychological works, the chief of which are *Outlines of Psychology*, *Teachers' Handbook of Psychology* and *Studies of Childhood*.

Sully belongs to what is called the English school of experimental psychology, and is Professor of Philosophy of Mind and Logic at University College, London. Valuable data have been collected from every available source, and upon these broad generalisations have been based. The author does not claim that his *Studies of Childhood* is a complete treatise on child-psychology, but that these "studies" "merely deal with certain aspects of children's minds which happen to have come under my notice, and to have had a special interest for me." The main chapters are:—"Age of Imagination," "The Dawn of Reason," "Products of Child-Thought," "The Little Linguist," "Subject to Fear," "The Child as Artist," "The Young Draughtsman," "Abstracts from a Father's Diary," and "George Sand's Childhood."

The Age of Imagination.

In the first essay the realm of fancy is dealt with. We are all aware that at a very early age children are full of fancy. They exist in a world of make-belief. Inanimate objects—sometimes of the crudest forms—are endowed with life and vigour. The doll becomes a living personality and the

wooden horse a *real* one in a child's imagination. "The wee mite of three and a half, spending more than half his days in trying to realize all manner of pretty, odd, startling fancies about animals, fairies, and the rest, is something vastly unlike the boy of six or seven, whose mind is now bent on understanding the make and go of machines, and of that big machine, the world."

"Imagination," says Professor Sully, "is intimately bound up with the life of feeling, and will assume as many directions as this life assumes. Hence the familiar fact that in some children imagination broods by preference on gloomy and terrifying objects, religious and other, whereas in others it selects what is bright and gladsome." Further on he says: "This transformation of the actual surroundings is, of course, restrained in serious moments, and in intercourse with older and graver folk. There is, however, a region of child-life where it knows no check, where the impulse to deck out its shabby reality with what is bright and gay has all its own way. This region is 'Play.'" The section devoted to "Imagination and Storyland" is full of interest. "We grown-up people," says the author, "are wont to flatter ourselves that we read stories: the child, if he could know what we call reading, would laugh at it. With what deftness does the little brain disentangle the language, often puzzling and strange enough, reducing it by a secret child-art to simplicity and to reality." Parents should remember that the explaining of a story is resented "because it interrupts the child's own spontaneous image-building."

The Dawn of Reason.

This chapter gives much food for thought, and deserves careful attention on the part of parents. Speaking of "questions," Dr. Sully says that in many cases children's questions are regarded as a studied annoyance. This is not so. The questioning is the outcome of the perplexity of the child to understand the innumerable things with which he is daily brought face to face. "The question," in the words of the author, "is the outcome of ignorance, coupled with a belief in the boundless knowledge of grown-up people. It is an attempt to add to the scrappy, unsatisfying information about things which the little questioner's own

observation has managed to gather, or others' half-understood words have succeeded in communicating. It is the outcome of intellectual craving, of a demand for mental food." It is well to bear in mind that the question, "What is this?" often means, "What is it called?" Another favourite form of questioning is, "Why?" Among the greatest difficulties with which a child is confronted may be mentioned (1) how things are produced; (2) disappearance of things; (3) vastness and infinite number of existent things perceived and heard about; (4) subject of "origins." Here are a few of the typical questions given: "Why does the wind blow?" "Who made God?" "What was there before God?" "If I'd gone upstairs could God make it that I hadn't?" Dealing with theological ideas, Dr. Sully writes: "The child is a metaphysician in the sense in which the earliest human thinkers were metaphysicians, pushing his questionings into the inmost nature of things, and back to their absolute beginnings."

He contends that in some instances questions are put by children, not in order to obtain information, but merely for the sake of asking questions. "In a certain amount of childish questioning, indeed, we have, I suspect, to do with a distinctly abnormal mental state, with an analogue of that mania of questions, or passion for mental rummaging, or prying into everything, which is a well-known phase of mental disease." As a final extract under this heading let me quote the following:—"To admit, however, that children's questions may now and again need this sort of wholesome snubbing is far from saying that we ought to treat all their questioning with a mild contempt. The little questioners flatter us by attributing superior knowledge to us, and good manners should compel us to treat their questions with some attention. And if, now and then, they torment us with a string of random, reckless, questioning, in how many cases, one wonders, are they not made to suffer, and that wrongfully, by having perfectly serious questions rudely cast back on their hands?"

Products of Child-Thought.

The products of child-thought are classified in three divisions, viz., (a) about nature, (b) psychological ideas, and

(c) theological ideas. "Beginning with their ideas of natural objects we find, as has been hinted, the influence of certain predominant tendencies. Of these the most important is the impulse to think of what is far off, whether in space or time, and so unobservable, as like what is near and observed. Along with this tendency, or rather as one particular development of it, there goes the disposition already illustrated, to vivify nature, to personify things, and so to assimilate their behaviour to the child's own, and to explain the origin of things by ideas of making and aiming at some purpose." Children are particularly interested in the movement of things, the "impressive phenomena of thunder and lightning," dreams, growth, the origin of babies and young animals and self. Among the theological ideas which puzzle young minds, Dr. Sully gives the following:—the beginning of life, death, heaven, God's creative power, omniscience, and goodness, and the doctrine of God's eternity which is "one of the real difficulties of theology for the child's intelligence."

The Little Linguist.

"No part of the life of a child appeals to us more powerfully perhaps than the first use of our language. The small person's first efforts in linguistics win us by a certain graciousness, by the friendly impulse they disclose to get mentally near us, to enter into the full fruition of human intercourse. The difficulties, too, which we manage to lay upon the young learner of our tongue, and the way in which he grapples with these, lend a peculiar interest, half pathetic, half humorous, to this field of infantile activity. To the scientific observer of infancy, moreover, the noting of the stages in the acquisition of speech is of the first importance."

Many amusing transformations of our words are given in this chapter. At first there is no attempt at sentence-building. Mere names, more especially substantives, adjectives and adverbs, are first spoken, *e.g.*, mamma, man, dad, milk, hot, nice, good, away, down, etc. In these first attempts it is often found that the predicate precedes the subject, as in the sentence, "Run away man," which means "the man runs (or has run) away." Again, "Laura bread give" was the form used for "give Laura bread."

Subject to Fear.

This subject is of the greatest interest to all concerned with the bringing-up of children. "That fear is one of the characteristic feelings of the child needs no proving. It seems to belong to these wee, weakly things, brought face to face with a new strange world, to tremble. They are naturally timid, as all that is weak and ignorant in nature is apt to be timid." Strange sounds, the magnitude of the sea, new and strange objects, animals, and darkness are dreaded by young children. The latter, *i.e.*, fear of darkness "is no doubt very common among children, and seems indeed to be one of their recognised characteristics." "There seem to be people," says Dr. Sully, "who have no idea what the agony of these early terrors amounts to. And since it is the unknown that excites this fear, and the unknown in childhood is almost everything, the possibilities of suffering from this source are great enough." I must content myself with one more quotation on this interesting subject. "Happy those little ones who have ever near them loving arms within whose magic circle the oncoming of the cruel fit of terror is instantly checked, giving place to a delicious calm. How unhappy those children must be who, being fearsome by nature, lack this refuge, who are left much alone to wrestle with their horrors as best they may, and are rudely repulsed when they bear their heart-quakings to others. I would not venture to say, still less should I care to suggest what is suffered by those unfortunates who find in those about them not comfort, assurance, support in their fearsome moments, but the worst source of their terrors."

I regret the exigencies of space will not permit me to consider the last four chapters which are full of interest, instructive and amusing, but I hope I have been able to show from the foregoing quotations that this is a book which, above all others, should be read from cover to cover.

"THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD." Tracy.

Dr. Tracy, Lecturer in Philosophy in the University of Toronto, has produced a valuable addition to child psychology. Not only has he given the results of his own observations, but he also compares his generalisations and deductions with

those of such eminent psychologists as Preyer, Baldwin, Sully, Perez, and others. President Hall writes in the Introduction:—"This dissertation is far more than a compilation. It brings important additions to our knowledge upon some of the most important topics. This is perhaps most noticeable in the case of the chapter on language, almost a monograph in itself, and which will interest philologists as well as psychologists and teachers."

Chapter I., on *Sensation*, deals with sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell, temperature, organic sensations, muscular feelings.

Chapter II. discusses fear, anger, surprise, astonishment, curiosity, æsthetic feelings, love, sympathy, jealousy, etc., under the heading of *Emotion*.

Chapter III., *Intellect*, comprises perception, memory, association, imagination, the discursive processes, the idea of self.

Impulsive, reflexive, instinctive, ideational movements are considered in the chapter on *Volition*.

Among the topics in Chapter V., dealing with *Language*, we find heredity *versus* education in language, the physiological development, and the phonetic and psychic development.

Two important appendices are given at the end of the volume, the former containing "Unpublished Sources of Information" and the latter "Published Sources of Information," both of which are comprehensive and invaluable.

I do not propose dealing with this volume to any further extent as I have already fully considered the subject when reviewing Compayré's "Psychology applied to Education" and Preyer's "Mental Development in the Child."